

## Coastal Electric members help alleviate rural hunger

If you're one of the 15,126 Coastal Electric Cooperative members who participate in Operation Round Up, did you know you're helping feed people in our community who might otherwise go hungry?

That's right! Members who participate in the Operation Round Up program allow Coastal Electric to round up their electric bill each month to the next whole dollar. Those nickels and dimes are pooled together and invested back into the local community through the Coastal Electric Cooperative Foundation.

A few cents every month may not seem like much, but that small change makes a huge difference.

Case in point: In January, the Coastal Electric Cooperative Foundation awarded a \$20,000 grant to America's



AMERICA'S SECOND HARVEST OF COASTAL GEORGIA



Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia to help fund their Mobile Pantry Program.

Second Harvest uses a refrigerated vehicle to deliver food directly to neighborhood distribution sites in Bryan, Liberty, Long and McIntosh counties. The key advantage of mobile pantries is that they not only get the food to people who need it, but mobile pantries also allow for more fresh foods like fruits, vegetables, dairy, meats and other protein items to be distributed, in addition to nonperishables.

According to Second Harvest, in the four counties Coastal Electric serves, 15,730 individuals face hunger—including 5,480 children.

"With free groceries, our rural neighbors are able to stretch their finances to pay for housing, medicine and utilities," says Mary Jane Crouch,

Executive Director at America's Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia. "They are also able to stretch their minds to do well in school and at work."

With the foundation's support, Second Harvest plans to provide a mobile food pantry three to 12 times each year in the four counties Coastal Electric serves. The organization will distribute about 20,000 pounds of food at each distribution to an average of 300 households each time.

The Coastal Electric Cooperative Foundation's mission is to assist with the food, health, safety, education and shelter needs of citizens in counties served by Coastal Electric. Thanks to generous Coastal Electric members and America's Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia, those needs are being met, one person at a time.

# Not just Bluffin’

## Holtons advocate for local fire department

On any given day, you’ll find Amber Holton investing time in worthy activities. She’s a wife, daughter and friend. As a Coastal Electric customer service rep, she assists co-op members with a smile and her kind disposition. She also volunteers in the community where she was born and raised, McIntosh County.

Now, Amber and her husband, Adam, are investing quite a bit of time fundraising for a cause close to their hearts—McIntosh County volunteer fire departments—after they were nominated to run for the titles of Mr. and Miz Shellman Bluff.

But the Holtons’ ties to local fire departments go beyond just fundraising. The couple serves together at the Shellman Bluff Volunteer Fire Department—Adam as assistant chief and Amber as secretary—handling administrative duties, managing equipment and, occasionally, assisting with exterior firefighting, though Amber tries to downplay it.

Mr. and Miz Shellman Bluff is sponsored by Friends of Shellman Bluff, a nonprofit dedicated to improving the quality of life for the residents of Shellman Bluff and surrounding communities. The Shellman Bluff St. Patrick’s Day Parade is the group’s primary fundraiser and benefits the Shellman Bluff and Harris Neck volunteer fire departments, along with community improvement projects.

Last year, the Friends of Shellman Bluff helped purchase 10 new sets of gear for the fire department. This year, Amber hopes the proceeds will buy four new composite air tanks to replace the older, heavier models the firefighters currently carry, promoting safety, balance and ease of mobility.

“When our fire department had been through a lot of changes and needed some help, the Friends of Shellman Bluff bought the equipment we needed,”

LET'S KICK OFF THIS FRIENDLY "JUST BLUFFIN"  
CAMPAIGN THE RIGHT WAY BY ANNOUNCING  
THESE TWO COUPLES

NOMINEES FOR 2023  
*Mr. + Miz Shellman Bluff*

TJ and CASEY

ADAM and AMBER

LET'S SHOW THEM OUR SUPPORT  
AS THEY GIVE BACK TO OUR COMMUNITY  
BY RUNNING FOR  
MR. & MIZ SHELLMAN BLUFF.

FRIENDS OF SHELLMAN BLUFF  
SHELLMAN BLUFF, GEORGIA

Amber says. “They’re there to support us. The least we can do is support them. It’s good for both of us.”

The Holtons’ fundraising efforts have truly been grassroots—walk inside any business in Shellman Bluff and you’ll most likely see a donation jar with their photo on it. Posters around town also feature links to Venmo and Cash App accounts. In addition, they stood for hours to work a boot drive at the community’s three-way stop, and

threw a Mardi Gras masquerade party.

If named Mr. and Miz Shellman Bluff, you’ll see Adam and Amber riding the fire truck in the St. Patrick’s Day Parade on March 25 at 11 a.m. According to Amber, the real perk of the title—besides the money raised—is bragging rights for the year.

For more information or to donate, visit the group’s Facebook page, Instagram account or [friendsofshellmanbluff.org](http://friendsofshellmanbluff.org).

# Right-of-way work keeps you connected



The first time many people encounter the term “right-of-way” is in a driver’s manual or on a driver’s license test. It brings to mind something you have (or yield to) when you’re behind the wheel of a motor vehicle.

But in the electric co-op world, “right-of-way” (ROW) takes on an important alternate meaning. It refers to the corridor or path an electric line follows, either along a road or through the woods.

Trees and branches that are downed by storms are a primary cause of power outages. Co-ops across Georgia have developed aggressive ROW maintenance programs, routinely trimming vegetation near power lines that could become a problem. Storms still may bring down branches or trees, but the trimmed-back vegetation is far enough from power lines that it is much less likely to fall across them.

“A good right-of-way program significantly reduces outages,” says Harry Reeves, Georgia EMC’s vice president of training, education and safety. “It also makes troubleshooting a lot easier.”

Trees along a utility ROW increase the possibility of power outages and blinks. They can also delay power restoration after storms because fallen



trees and debris must be cleared before crews can gain access to damaged poles or lines.

If a tree branch inadvertently touches a power line, it can become hazardous—even deadly. When a tree limb comes in contact with a power line, someone touching or climbing the tree could be shocked or even electrocuted. It can also produce a spark, which can start a fire, especially if the area is very dry.

Electric cooperatives obtain ROW easements for new construction, giving permission to cut and keep clear all trees within a set distance of primary power lines, secondary and service lines.

Some co-ops use their own employees to do ROW work, while others hire contract crews.

Proper reclearing consists of removing trees, mowing underbrush, controlling vegetation growth and trimming limbs that extend into the ROW.

Many times trees that are outside of the allowed cutting area of the ROW are responsible for outages. The trees and/or tree limbs are not within the ROW, but the trees are tall enough to strike the wires when they fall.

If you believe that a tree on your property poses a threat to a power line, call your electric cooperative. If it is determined that the tree is a danger and could strike the wires in falling, it could be removed at no cost to you.

In addition, when planting a tree in your yard, keep in mind the tree’s size at maturity. The larger the full-grown tree will be, the farther it needs to be from a power line.

Safety and reliability are priorities for electric cooperatives. Proper ROW maintenance promotes both.

# CONNECTIONS

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Bethany Akridge, Editor  
Coastal Electric Cooperative  
1265 S. Coastal Highway  
P.O. Box 109  
Midway, GA 31320  
(912) 880-2293, direct line

[bethany.akridge@coastalelectric.coop](mailto:bethany.akridge@coastalelectric.coop)

## Find us online:

[www.CoastalElectric.Coop](http://www.CoastalElectric.Coop)

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*Coastal Electric Cooperative, your Touchstone Energy® Partner, is a not-for-profit, member-owned power cooperative providing electricity to the people of Bryan, Liberty, Long and McIntosh counties.*



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Cooperatives

*The power of human connections*



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